



5th Grade Winter Mini-Unit of Study

The Land I Lost **Student Journal**



First Edition



The World

Quick Write
What is Culture?

Before watching the video answer the question “What is culture?”

Revisit the question, “What is culture?” after each activity. Has your definition changed?

Circle Map	
Video	
Consensus with group	

Reflection

Directions: Think about your discussion with your classmates and your definition of culture. How is your culture reflected in your home?

The Land I Lost: Adventures of a Boy in Vietnam

I was born on the central highlands of Vietnam in a small hamlet on a riverbank that had a deep jungle on one side and a chain of high mountains on the other. Across the river, rice fields stretched to the slopes of another chain of mountains.

There were fifty houses in our hamlet, scattered along the river or propped against the mountainsides. The houses were made of bamboo and covered with coconut leaves, and each was surrounded by a deep trench to protect it from wild animals or thieves. The only way to enter a house was to walk across a “monkey bridge” -- a single bamboo stick that spanned the trench. At night we pulled the bridges into our houses and were safe.

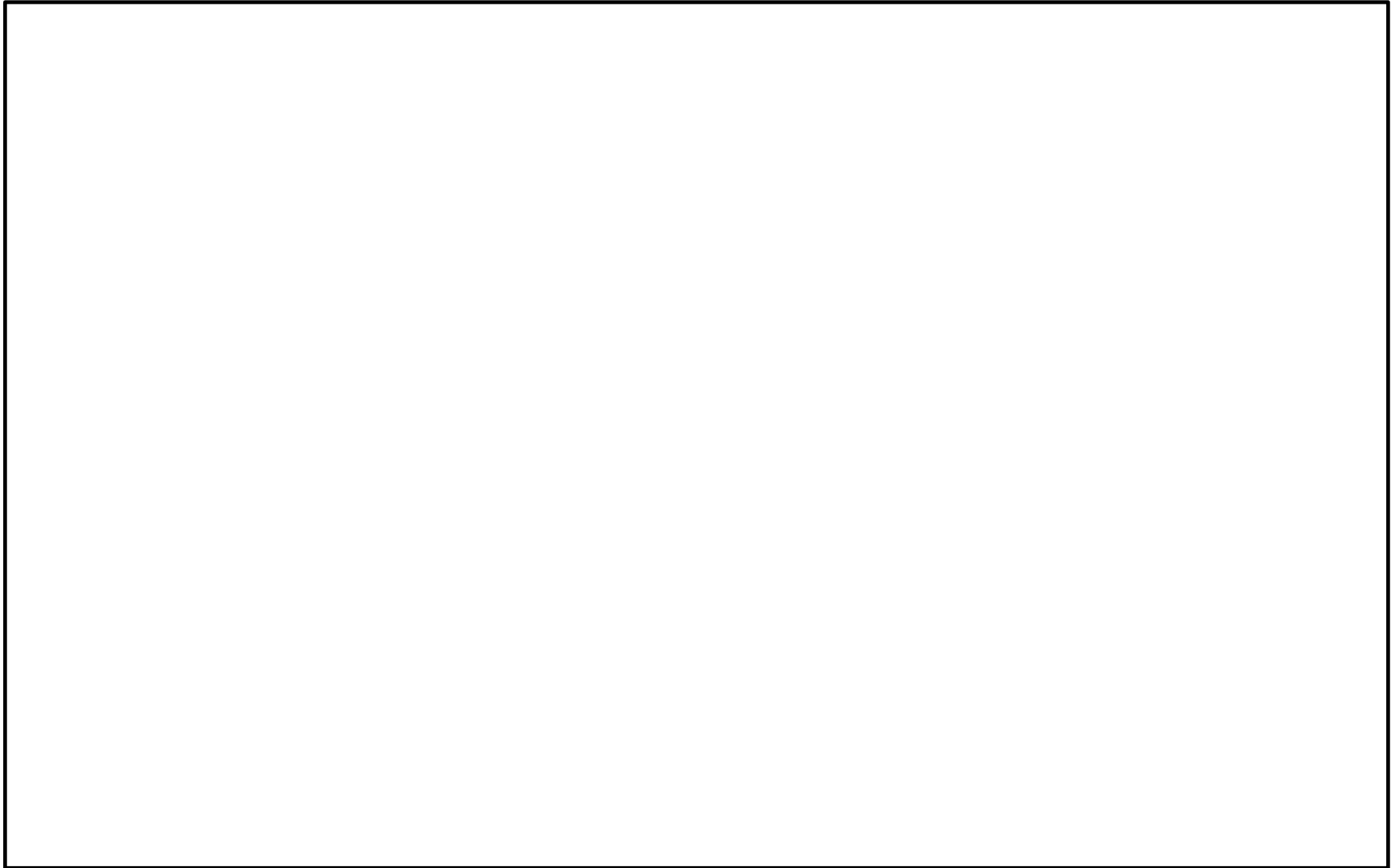
There were no shops or marketplaces in our hamlet. If we needed supplies -- medicine, cloth, soaps, or candles -- we had to cross over the mountains and travel to a town nearby. We used the river mainly for traveling to distant hamlets, but it also provided us with plenty of fish.

During the six-month rainy season, nearly all of us helped plant and cultivate fields of rice, sweet potatoes, Indian mustard, eggplant, tomatoes, hot peppers, and corn. But during the dry season, we became hunters and turned to the jungle.

Wild animals played a very large part in our lives. There were four animals we feared the most: the tiger, the lone wild hog, the crocodile, and the horse snake. Tigers were always trying to steal cattle. Sometimes, however, when a tiger became old and slow it became a man-eater. But a lone wild hog was even more dangerous than a tiger. It attacked every creature in sight, even when it had no need for food. Or it did crazy things, such as charging into the hamlet in broad daylight, ready to kill or to be killed.

The river had different dangers: crocodiles. But of all the animals, the most hated and feared was the huge horse snake. It was sneaky and attacked people and cattle just for the joy of killing. It would either crush its victim to death or poison it with a bite.

Thinking Map for Imagery

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for students to draw or write their thoughts on imagery.

Reflection

Setting

How did the author's word choice help you to visualize the setting? Use examples from the text to support your answer.

Focus Questions What memories does the author carry with him of his boyhood in Vietnam? Why are these memories important to him?

The Land I Lost:

Adventures of a Boy in Vietnam

from the book by Huynh Quang Nhuong
illustrated by Neil Waldman



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Like all farmers' children in the hamlet, I started working at the age of six. My seven sisters helped by working in the kitchen, weeding the garden, gathering eggs, or taking water to the cattle. I looked after the family herd of water buffaloes. Someone always had to be with the herd because no matter how carefully a water buffalo was trained, it always was ready to nibble young rice plants when no one was looking. Sometimes, too, I fished for the family while I guarded the herd, for there were plenty of fish in the flooded rice fields during the rainy season.





I was twelve years old when I made my first trip to the jungle with my father. I learned how to track game, how to recognize useful roots, how to distinguish edible mushrooms from poisonous ones. I learned that if birds, raccoons, squirrels, or monkeys had eaten the fruits of certain trees, then those fruits were not poisonous. Often they were not delicious, but they could calm a man's hunger and thirst.

My father, like most of the villagers, was a farmer and a hunter, depending upon the season. But he also had a college education, so in the evenings he helped to teach other children in our hamlet, for it was too small to afford a professional schoolteacher.

My mother managed the house, but during the harvest season she could be found in the fields, helping my father get the crops home; and as the wife of a hunter she knew how to dress and nurse a wound and took good care of her husband and his hunting dogs.

I went to the lowlands to study for a while because I wanted to follow my father as a teacher when I grew up. I always planned to return to my hamlet to live the rest of my life there. But war disrupted my dreams. The land I love was lost to me forever.

These stories are my memories. . . .

When she was eighty years old grandmother was still quite strong. She could use her own teeth to eat corn on the cob or to chew on sugar plants to extract juice from them. Every two days she walked for more than an hour to reach the marketplace, carrying a heavy load of food with her, and then spent another hour walking back home. And even though she was quite old, traces of her beauty still lingered on: Her hands, her feet, her face revealed that she had been an attractive young woman. Nor did time do much damage to the youthful spirit of my grandmother.

One of her great passions was theater, and this passion never diminished with age. No matter how busy she was, she never missed a show when there was a group of actors in town. If no actors visited our hamlet for several months, she would organize her own show in which she was the manager, the producer, and the young leading lady, all at the same time.

My grandmother's own plays were always melodramas inspired by books she had read and by what she had seen on the stage. She always chose her favorite grandson to play the role of the hero, who would, without fail, marry the heroine at the end and live happily ever after. And when my sisters would tell her that she was getting too old to play the role of the young heroine anymore, my grandmother merely replied: "Anybody can play this role if she's young at heart."

When I was a little boy my grandmother often took me to see the opera. She knew Chinese mythology by heart, and the opera was often a dramatization of this mythology. On one special occasion, during the Lunar New Year celebrations—my favorite holiday, because children could do anything they wanted and by tradition no one could scold them—I accompanied my grandmother to the opera.

When we reached the theater I wanted to go in immediately. But my grandmother wanted to linger at the entrance and talk to her friends. She chatted for more than an hour. Finally we entered the theater, and at that moment the “Faithful One” was onstage, singing sadly. The “Faithful One” is a common character in Chinese opera. He could be a good minister, or a valiant general, or someone who loved and served his king faithfully. But in the end he is unjustly persecuted by the king, whose opinion of him has been changed by the lies of the “Flatterer,” another standard character.

When my grandmother saw the “Faithful One” onstage she looked upset and gave a great sigh. I was too interested in what was happening to ask her the reason, and we spent the next five hours watching the rest of the opera. Sometimes I cried because my grandmother cried at the pitiful situation of the “Faithful One.” Sometimes I became as angry as my grandmother did at the wickedness of the “Flatterer.”



When we went home that night my grandmother was quite sad. She told my mother that she would have bad luck in the following year because when we entered the theater, the "Faithful One" was onstage. I was puzzled. I told my grandmother that she was confused. It would be a good year for us because we saw the good guy first. But my mother said, "No, son. The 'Faithful One' always is in trouble and it takes him many years to vindicate himself. Our next year is going to be like one of his bad years."

So, according to my mother's and grandmother's logic, we would have been much better off in the new year if we had been lucky enough to see the villain first!

My grandmother had married a man whom she loved with all her heart, but who was totally different from her. My grandfather was very shy, never laughed loudly, and always spoke very softly. And physically he was not as strong as my grandmother. But he excused his lack of physical strength by saying that he was a "scholar."

About three months after their marriage, my grandparents were in a restaurant and a rascal began to insult my grandfather because he looked weak and had a pretty wife. At first he just made insulting remarks, such as, "Hey! Wet chicken! This is no place for a weakling!"

My grandfather wanted to leave the restaurant even though he and my grandmother had not yet finished their meal. But my grandmother pulled his shirt sleeve and signaled him to remain seated. She continued to eat and looked as if nothing had happened.

Tired of yelling insults without any result, the rascal got up from his table, moved over to my grandparents' table, and grabbed my grandfather's chopsticks. My grandmother immediately wrested the chopsticks from him and struck the rascal on his cheekbone with her elbow. The blow was so quick and powerful that he lost his balance and fell on the floor.

Instead of finishing him off, as any street fighter would do, my grandmother let the rascal recover from the blow. But as soon as he got up again, he kicked over the table between him and my grandmother, making food and drink fly all over the place. Before he could do anything else, my grandmother kicked him on the chin. The kick was so swift that my grandfather didn't even see it. He only heard a heavy thud, and then saw the rascal tumble backward and collapse on the ground.

All the onlookers were surprised and delighted, especially the owner of the restaurant. Apparently the rascal, one of the best karate fighters of our area, came to this restaurant every day and left without paying for his food or drink, but the owner was too afraid to confront him.

While the rascal's friends tried to revive him, everyone else surrounded my grandmother and asked her who had taught her karate. She said, "Who else? My husband!"



After the fight at the restaurant people assumed that my grandfather knew karate very well but refused to use it for fear of killing someone. In reality, my grandmother had received special training in karate from my great-great uncle from the time she was eight years old.

Anyway, after that incident, my grandfather never had to worry again. Anytime he had some business downtown, people treated him very well. And whenever anyone happened to bump into him on the street, they bowed to my grandfather in a very respectful way.

One morning my grandmother wanted me to go outside with her. We climbed a little hill that looked over the whole area, and when we got to the top she looked at the rice field below, the mountain on the horizon, and especially at the river. As a young girl she had often brought her herd of water buffaloes to the river to drink while she swam with the other children of the village. Then we visited the graveyard where her husband and some of her children were buried. She touched her husband's tombstone and said, "Dear, I will join you soon." And then we walked back

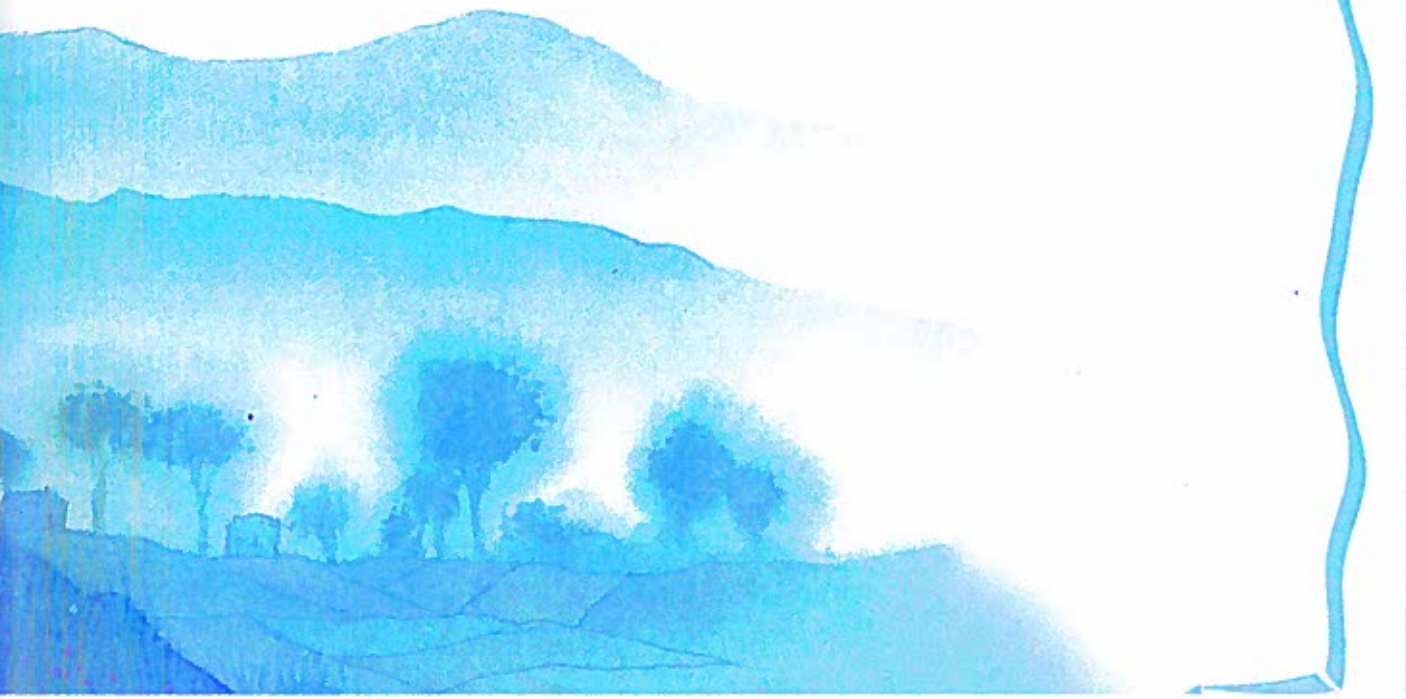


to the garden and she gazed at the fruit trees her husband had planted, a new one for each time she had given birth to a child. Finally, before we left the garden my sister joined us, and the two of them fed a few ducks swimming in the pond.

That evening my grandmother did not eat much of her dinner. After dinner she combed her hair and put on her best dress. We thought that she was going to go out again, but instead she went to her bedroom and told us that she didn't want to be disturbed.

The family dog seemed to sense something was amiss, for he kept looking anxiously at everybody and whined from time to time. At midnight my mother went to my grandmother's room and found that she had died, with her eyes shut, as if she were sleeping normally.

It took me a long time to get used to the reality that my grandmother had passed away. Wherever I was, in the house, in the garden, out on the fields, her face always appeared so clearly to me. And even now, many years later, I still have the feeling that my last conversation with her has happened only a few days before.



Double Entry Journal

The Land I Lost

Main Points from the Text	Supporting Evidence

The Land I Lost

Text Dependent Questions

1. From whose point of view is this story told? Cite evidence to support your answer.
2. How do the seasons and weather affect the family's livelihood and jobs in the village?
3. Read page 183 again. The narrator says "But the war disrupted my dreams. The land I love was lost to me forever." What do you think he means by that?
4. How does the author illustrate that the grandmother was both strong and beautiful? Cite evidence to support your answer.
5. Why was the Lunar New Year so special to the boy? What was important about this particular celebration?

6. How does grandmother show that she is strong both physically and in spirit when she interacts with the rascal in the restaurant? How does she show her love for her husband?

7. How do you know that time has passed between the memory of the theater and the next one the narrator writes about?

8. Foreshadowing is a tool author's use to give the reader a "clue" as to what might happen later in the story. When the grandmother says "Dear, I will join you soon," what does that tell us might happen?

9. The narrator says that even after grandmother died, her face always appeared so clearly to him. What is special about the house, the garden, and the field? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

Roles and Responsibilities

Directions: Read pages 182 - 183 of *The Land I Lost* and create a classifying map demonstrating the roles and responsibilities of those in the hamlet based on evidence from the text.

Quick Write
Roles and Responsibilities

How do the family roles, identified on pages 182-183, reveal the traditions and beliefs of the author's culture?

Reflection

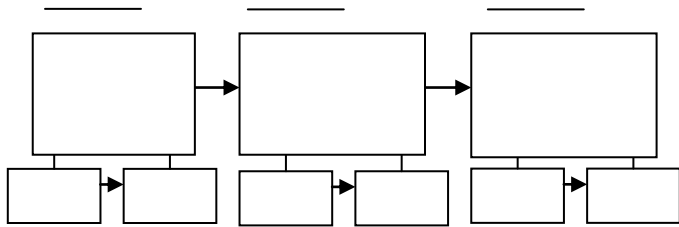
Roles and Responsibilities

What are the roles and responsibilities in your home? Chart on a tree map and write a paragraph about how you think these roles and responsibilities relate to your culture. Use the back of the page if you need more space.



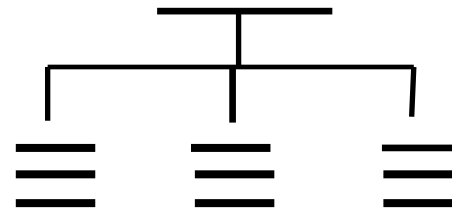
Which Thinking Map matches the structure of the text that the author used?

Flow Map: “How To”, Sequence, Chronological order (time)



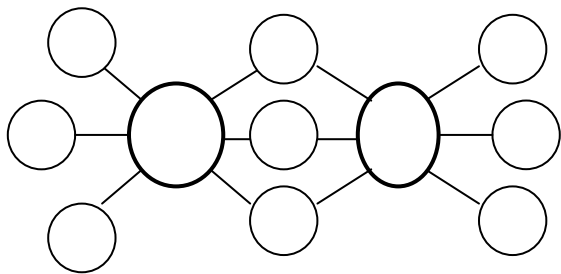
Words you might see: first, second, third, then, next, after, later, finally, at last, before, in the end, earlier

Tree Map: Main Idea and Details, Classifying and Categorizing



Words you might see: all about, types, kinds; (there is a main statement and then details that support the main idea that informs.)

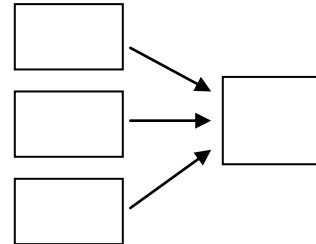
Double Bubble Map: Compare and Contrast



Words you might see: **Same:** also, as well, similarly, so, too, as well
Different: although, but, even though, however, instead of, yet

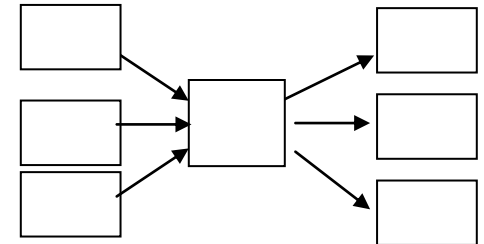
Multi-Flow Map: Cause/Effect or “To Explain Why”

Many causes lead to one effect



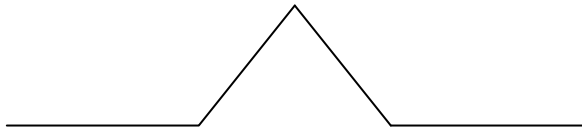
Words: because, one reason, another reason, for instance, in fact, for example, since, such as, of course, that is, actually

causes leads an event that causes effects



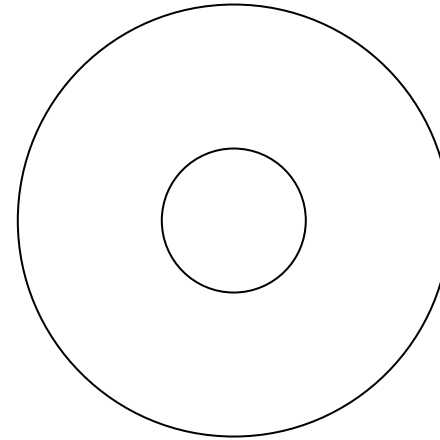
Words: so, as a result, because of this, hence, then, therefore, thus, accordingly, because of ____, we have ____.

Bridge Map: Seeing Relationships – how things remind you of something else



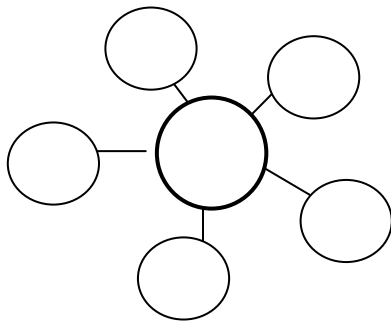
Words you might see: just like, as ___ as, same as, looks like, reminds,

Circle Map: Defining



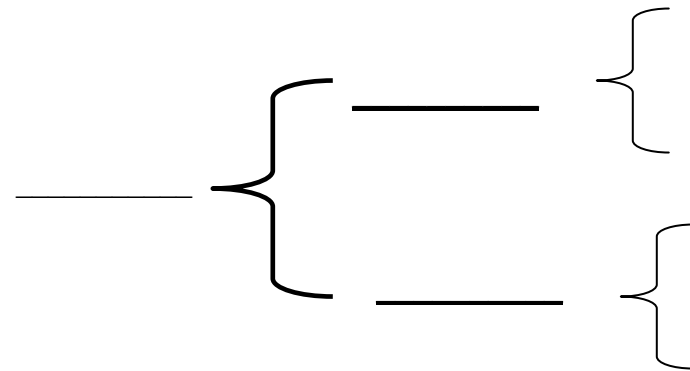
Words you might see: can be defined, is a, has, definition

Bubble Map: Describing a person or place



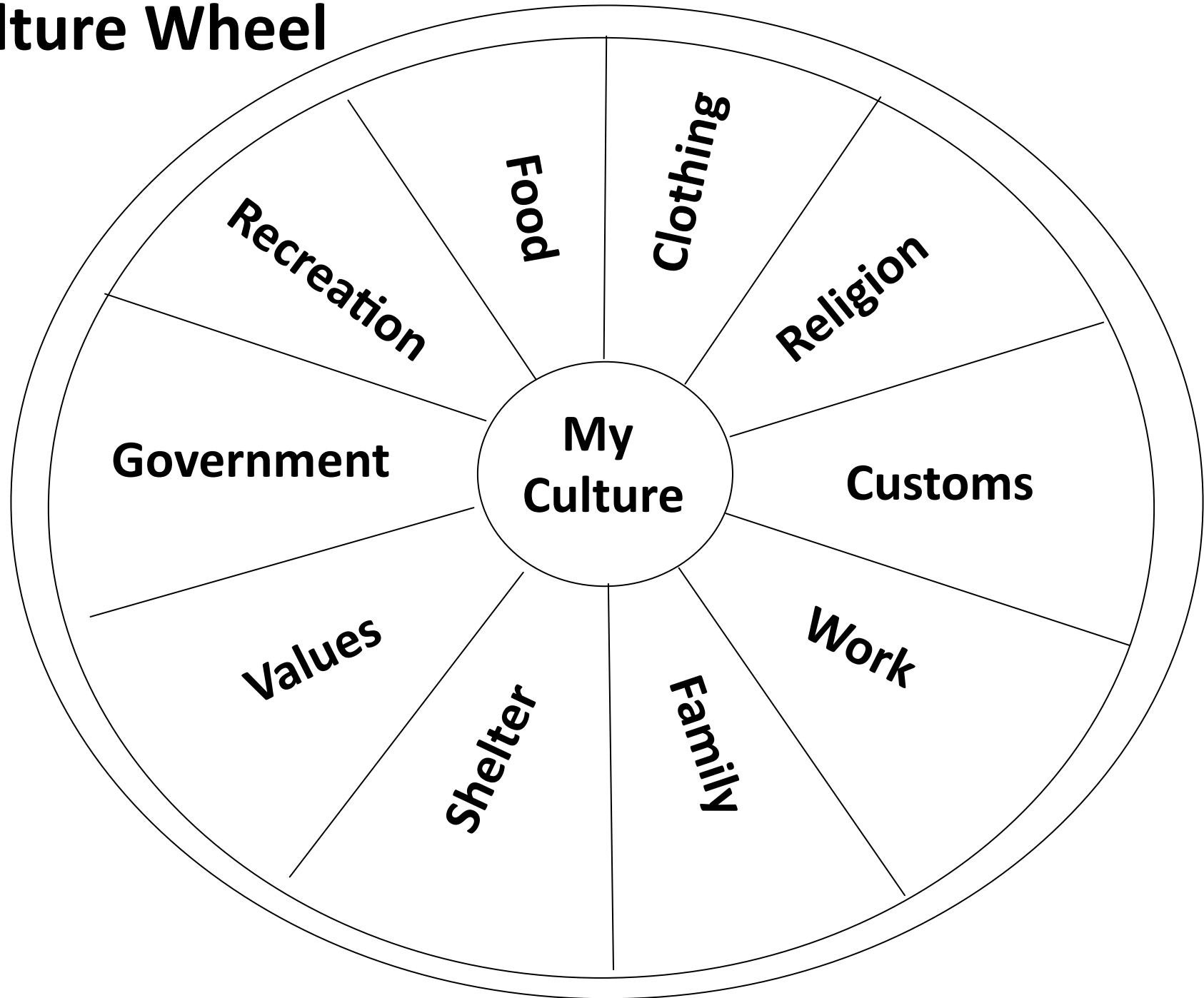
Words you might see: can be describes, is, has, (lots of adjectives!)

Brace Map: Whole to Parts

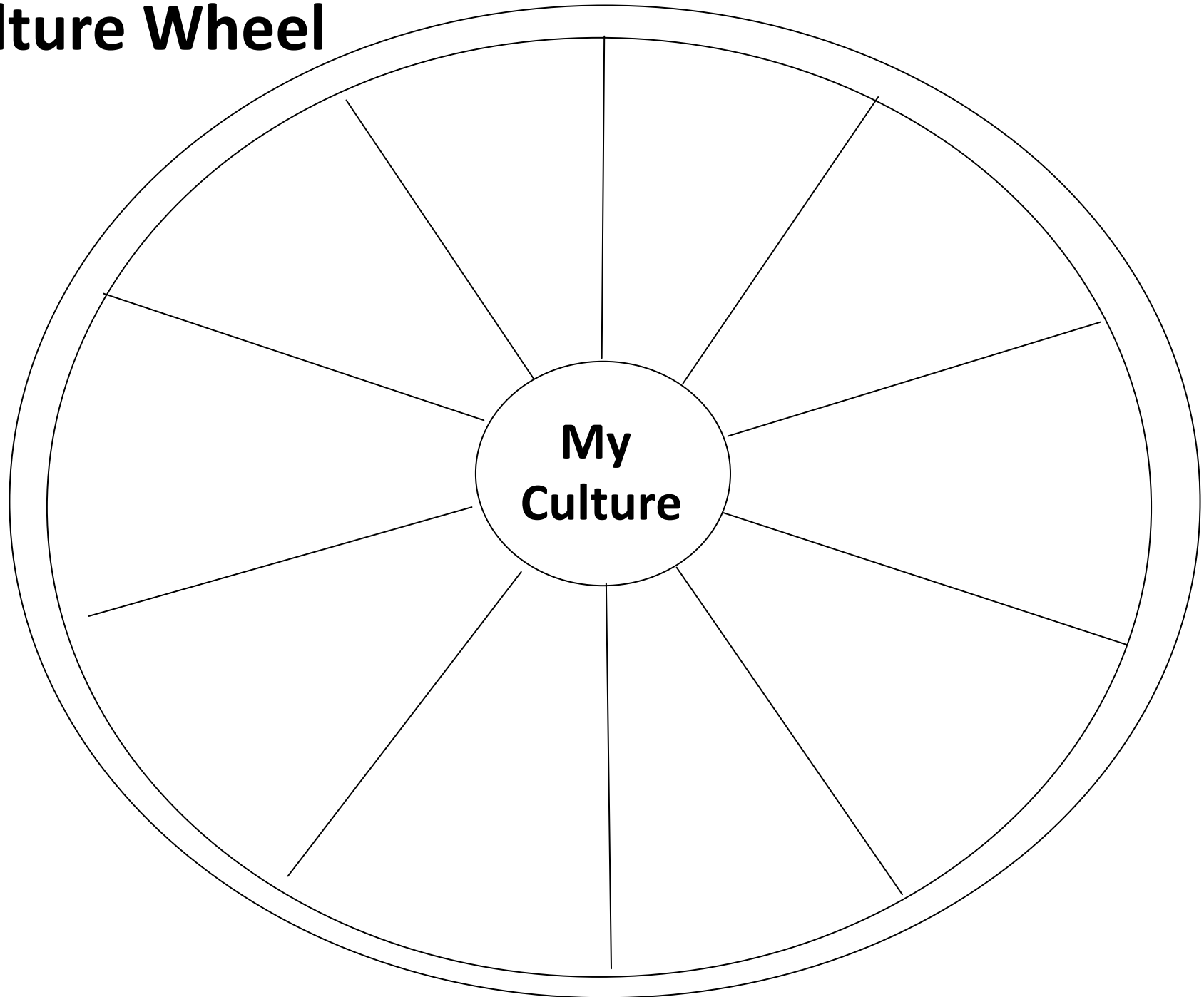


Words you might see: parts of, has the following, has (must be physical things that are parts of a whole)

Culture Wheel



Culture Wheel



Oral Presentation Rubric

TRAIT	4	3	2	1
NONVERBAL SKILLS				
EYE CONTACT	Holds attention of entire audience with the use of direct eye contact, seldom looking at notes.	Consistent use of direct eye contact with audience, but still returns to notes.	Displayed minimal eye contact with audience, while reading mostly from the notes.	No eye contact with audience, as entire report is read from notes.
BODY LANGUAGE	Movements seem fluid and help the audience visualize.	Made movements or gestures that enhances articulation.	Very little movement or descriptive gestures.	No movement or descriptive gestures.
POISE	Student displays relaxed, self-confident nature about self, with no mistakes.	Makes minor mistakes, but quickly recovers from them; displays little or no tension.	Displays mild tension; has trouble recovering from mistakes.	Tension and nervousness is obvious; has trouble recovering from mistakes.

COMMENTS:

VERBAL SKILLS				
ENTHUSIASM	Demonstrates a strong, positive feeling about topic during entire presentation.	Occasionally shows positive feelings about topic.	Shows some negativity toward topic presented.	Shows absolutely no interest in topic presented.
ELOCUTION	Student uses a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms so that all audience members can hear presentation.	Student's voice is clear. Student pronounces most words correctly. Most audience members can hear presentation.	Student's voice is low. Student incorrectly pronounces terms. Audience members have difficulty hearing presentation.	Student mumbles, incorrectly pronounces terms, and speaks too quietly for a majority of students to hear.

COMMENTS:

CONTENT				
SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE	Student demonstrates full knowledge by answering all class questions with explanations and elaboration.	Student is at ease with expected answers to all questions, without elaboration.	Student is uncomfortable with information and is able to answer only rudimentary questions.	Student does not have grasp of information; student cannot answer questions about subject.
ORGANIZATION	Student presents information in logical, interesting sequence which audience can follow.	Student presents information in logical sequence which audience can follow.	Audience has difficulty following presentation because student jumps around.	Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information.
MECHANICS	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Student's presentation has four or more spelling and/or grammatical errors.

COMMENTS:

